

Message Text

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EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ENRG, PBOR, JA, UR

SUBJECT: PRIMIN TANAKA CORRESPONDENCE WITH BREZHNEV

REF S: (A) TOKYO 2835 (B) MOSCOW 2802

SUMMARY: GOJ PLEASED THAT TANAKA LETTER ACHIEVED LIMITED OBJECTIVE OF IMPROVING TONE OF SOVIET- JAPANESE RELATIONS. GOJ ESTIMATES THAT FUNDAMENTAL POSITIONS OF BOTH SIDES ON NORTHERN TERRITORIES QUESTION REMAIN UNCHANGED. FONOFF EXPECTS SOME AGREEMENT WILL BE CONCLUDED ON SIBERIAN DEVELOPMENT AND FONMIN OHIRA WILL VISIT MOSCOW WITH 1973 FOR SECOND ROUND OF PEACE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS. END SUMMARY

1. FOLLOWING UP DIRGEN OKAWARA' S BRIEFING FOR DCM (REF A), EMBOFFS EXPLORED ORIGINS AND RAMIFICATIONS OF PRIMIN TANAKA' S LETTER TO BREZHNEV WITH FONOFF CONTACTS, PRINCIPALLY FIRST EAST EUROPE DIV HEAD ARAI AND ANALYSIS DIV HEAD DONOWAKI. THIS MESSAGE CONSITITUATES CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF THESE EXPLORATIONS. ARAI STRESSED (AS HAD OKAWARA TO DCM) THAT GOJ WAS DISCUSSING TANAKA LETTER IN DETAIL WITH NO RPT NO OTHER GOVERNMENT; MOREOVER, FONOFF IS PROVIDING JAPANESE AMBASSADORS ABROAD WITH ONLY VERY LIMITED INFORMATION. EMBASSY THEREFORE REQUESTS THAT SOURCES BE PROTECTED AND CONTENTS THIS MESSAGE BE CLOSELY HELD.

2. BACKGROUND - FONOFF SOURCES SAID SOME ELEMENTS OF GOJ HAD BEEN CONCERNED DURING PAST SEVERAL MONTHS THAT JAPAN
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MAY HAVE LEANED TOO FAR TOWARD PRC AND IN PROCESS AROUSED

EVIDENT ANXIETY OF USSR. FONOFF HAD CLOSELY STUDIED SOVIET SIGNALS, STARTING WITH LETTER FROM BREZHNEV TO TANAKA BROUGHT BACK BY DIET MEMBER FUKUDA IN OCTOBER 1972. FONOFF WAS IMPRESSED BY TWO PASSAGES IN BREZHNEV'S FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY SPEECH DELIVERED DECEMBER 22, SPECIFICALLY HIS STATEMENTS THAT SOVIET AND JAPANESE LEADERS FACE TASK OF PLACING RELATIONSHIP ON TREATY BASIS, HAVE DUTY TO RESOLVE PENDING ISSUES (PLURAL) LEFT OVER FROM WORLD WAR II, AND THAT 1973 WILL BE VERY IMPORTANT YEAR FOR SOVIET- JAPANESE RELATIONS. MOREOVER, FONOFF HAD CONCLUDED, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO SIBERIAN PROJECTS, THAT IT WAS USELESS TO CONTINUE TALKING WITH SOVIET BUREAUCRATS AND THAT PROGRESS COULD BE ACHIEVED ONLY BY GOING TO TOP OF SOVIET HIERARCHY. ARAI OBSERVED THAT SOVIET PRESSURES, PARTICULARLY AMBASSADOR TROYANOVSKY'S RECENT RATHER THREATENING SPEECHES (TOKYO 1192 AND A-1295 OF DEC 29, 1972) HAD SLOWED RATHER THAN HASTENED GOJ WILLINGNESS TO BE FORTHCOMING. IN ANY CASE, HAVING DECIDED TO TAKE INITIATIVE, FONOFF WEIGHED SEVERAL ACTIONS, INCLUDING PRIME MINISTERIAL OR OTHER MINISTERIAL VISIT, BUT FINALLY SETTLED ON LETTER FROM TANAKA AS BEST DEVICE TO ACHIEVE FAST ACTION.

3. SUBSTANCE AND TONE OF LETTER - BOTH ARAI AND DONOWAKI STRESSED THAT LETTER WAS CAREFULLY DRAFTED TO PRESERVE FUNDAMENTAL GOJ POSITION ON PEACE TREATY AND NORTHERN TERRITORIES, I. E., JAPAN WILL NOT SIGN PEACE TREATY WITHOUT IMMEDIATE RETURN OF ALL ISLANDS IN NORTHERN TERRITORIES. HOWEVER, WHILE ADHERING TO PRINCIPLE, FONOFF STROVE FOR FRIENDLY RHETORIC IN STRESSING IMPORTANCE OF OVERALL RELATIONS BETWEEN JAPAN AND USSR. MATTER OF SIBERIAN DEVELOPMENT WAS INTRODUCED AS SMALL BUT INTEGRAL PART OF LETTER, WITH CONSCIOUS EFFORT MADE TO AVOID MENTIONING ANY SPECIFIC PROJECT (PRESUMABLY BECAUSE OF RIVALRIES WITHIN JAPANESE BUSINESS COMMUNITY). LANGUAGE RELATING TO SIBERIAN DEVELOPMENT IS MOST POSITIVE THAT GOJ HAS EVER USED AND WAS MEANT TO INDICATE THAT JAPAN WILL FOLLOW THROUGH WITH SIBERIAN PROJECTS IF CERTAIN CONDITIONS ARE MET.

4. GOJ MOTIVATION AND TIMING - ARAI WAS SOMEWHAT NONCOMMITTAL WHEN ASKED WHAT GOJ HOPED TO ACHIEVE WITH TANAKA LETTER, BEYOND DESIRE TO CALM SOVIET APPREHENSIONS (NOTED ABOVE) AND IMPROVE OVERALL CLIMATE OF RELATIONS. HE AGREED THAT STRONG JAPANESE DESIRE TO DIVERSIFY SOURCES OF PETROLEUM
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WAS IMPORTANT FACTOR, BUT INSISTED THAT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AGREEMENTS MUST FIRST BE SATISFACTORY TO BOTH GOVERNMENTS AND TO JAPANESE COMMERCIAL FIRMS. WITH RESPECT TO GOJ TIMING, ARAI SAID IT HAD BEEN LEFT ULTIMATELY TO PRIME MINISTER TANAKA AND ARAI DECLINED TO SPECULATE ON ANY DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS INVOLVED.

5. SOVIET REACTIONS - ARAI SAID BREZHNEV'S IMMEDIATE REACTION WAS

VERY POSITIVE, AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED. BREZHNEV INDICATED USSR IS READY FOR SECOND ROUND OF PEACE TALKS WITHIN 1973 AND HE ATTACHED POLITICAL AS WELL AS ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE TO JAPANESE PARTICIPATION IN SIBERIAN PROJECTS. HOWEVER, ARAI ALSO THINKS THAT USSR UNDERSTANDS GOJ POSITION ON NORTHERN TERRITORIES AND PEACE TREATY REMAINS UNCHANGED AND GOJ, FOR ITS PART, CONSIDERS SOVIET POSITION ALSO AS UNCHANGED. AS FOR SUBSEQUENT SOVIET PRESS PLAY, ARAI AND DONOWAKI TENDED TO DISCOUNT ITS IMPORTANCE FOR SOVIET-JAPANESE RELATIONS AND INTERPRETED IT RATHER AS SOVIET POSTURING VIS- A- VIS PRC. IN THIS CONNECTION, ARAI OBSERVED THAT JAPAN MUST BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL NOT TO BE EXPLOITED BY USSR IN ITS ANTI-PRC CAMPAIGN.

6. GOJ REACTIONS - GOJ WAS PLEASED WITH BREZHNEV'S RECEPTION NOT ONLY OF LETTER BUT OF AMBASSADOR NIIZEKI FOR SUCH LENGTHY MEETING. ARAI NOTED THAT THIS WAS FIRST TIME BREZHNEV HAD RECEIVED JAPANESE AMBASSADOR. TO FONOFF KNOWLEDGE, BREZHNEV - WHO RARELY RECEIVES AMBASSADORS FROM NON- COMMUNIST STATES - HAD PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED ONLY AMBASSADORS OF GUINEA AND FRANCE, AND THEN PRIMARILY IN CONNECTION WITH PLANNING FOR HIGH LEVEL VISITS.

7. IMMEDIATE RESULTS - ARAI FORESEES IMMEDIATE ACTION ON TWO FRONTS:

(A) GOJ HAS INDICATED POSITIVE SUPPORT FOR PRIVATE JAPANESE PARTICIPATION IN SIBERIAN DEVELOPMENT AND NEGOTIATIONS WILL THEREFORE ACCELERATE. MITI MINISTER NAKASONE APPROVED AMBASSADOR TROYANOVSKY'S LONGSTANDING REQUEST FOR APPOINTMENT (MEETING TOOK PLACE MARCH 12) AND IS MAKING TENTATIVE PLANS TO VISIT MOSCOW IN MAY (PRESUMABLY TO REAP POLITICAL BENEFITS FROM BEING PRESENT AT SIGNING OF GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TYUMEN PROJECT).

(B) SECOND ROUND OF PEACE TREATY TALKS WILL DEFINITELY BE HELD IN 1973, WITH FONMIN OHIRA VISITING MOSCOW SOMETIME AFTER JULY TO LEAD JAPANESE SIDE.

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8. TANAKA TO MOSCOW - ARAI EXPRESSED VIEW THAT, CONTRARY TO EXCITED SPECULATION IN JAPANESE PRESS, ANY DISCUSSION OF VISIT BY PRIMIN TANAKA TO MOSCOW IS DECIDELY PREMATURE. FONOFF WANTS TIME FOR TEXT OF LETTER TO SINK IN (ARAI WONDERED OUTLOUD IF BREZHNEV HAD REALLY READ LETTER VERY CAREFULLY SINCE HIS IMMEDIATE POSITIVE REACTION WAS SOMEWHAT AT VARIANCE WITH GOJ INFLEXIBILITY ON NORTHERN TERRITORIES QUESTION) AND WISHES IN ANY CASE TO AWAIT FORMAL REPLY. ARAI ALSO BELIEVES PREVIOUS GOJ POLICY SHOULD BE CONTINUED, I. E., THAT PRIMIN WOULD VISIT MOSCOW ONLY IF NORTHERN TERRITORIES ARE RETURNED, AND VICEMIN HOGEN SEEMS TO AGREE. ARAI ACKNOWLEDGED, HOWEVER, THAT DECISION TO VISIT MOSCOW IS TANAKA'S TO MAKE AND WOULD INVOLVE POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS OUTSIDE RESPONSIBILITIES OF FONOFF. IN SIMILAR VEIN, DONOWAKI MENTIONED THAT HALLORAN ARTICLE IN NEW YORK TIMES MARCH 8 WAS COUNTERPRODUCTIVE FROM GOJ POINT OF VIEW BECAUSE IT

SUGGESTED FLEXIBILITY ON NORTHERN TERRITORIES ISSUE WHEN, IN
DONOWAKI'S VIEW, NO SUCH FLEXIBILITY EXISTS.

9. COMMENT - FONOFF APPEARS QUITE SATISFIED AND EVEN MILDLY
PLEASED WITH TURN OF EVENTS PRECIPITATED BY TANAKA LETTER.
HOWEVER, ALL OUR FONOFF SOURCES STRESSED THAT FUNDAMENTAL
PROBLEMS -- SPECIFICALLY NORTHERN TERRITORIES -- REMAIN. WHILE
ATMOSPHERICS OF SOVIET- JAPANESE RELATIONS WILL IMPROVE,
AND SOME AGREEMENT ON SIBERIAN DEVELOPMENT SEEMS LIKELY, FONOFF
SEES NO HOPE FOR EARLY PEACE TREATY UNLESS SOVIETS CONCEDE ON
NORTHERN TERRITORIES.
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